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SONGS OF MANY DAYS



# SONGS OF MANY DAYS.

BY K. C.

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"Look then into thine heart and write."—LONGFELLOW.

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AND ROYAL ULSTER WORKS, BELFAST

1882



To the Memory of

MY MOTHER,

WITH EVERLASTING LOVE AND REVERENCE.

---

"Sad all, and soft in the moonlight of Memory, the lost Loved  
One all in the right, as we now see, we all in the wrong.

"The departed are still with us ; are not both they and we in  
the hand of God ? A little while and we shall all meet."

T. CARLYLE.



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## THE DAUGHTERS OF PRÆTUS.

### ARGUMENT.

The three daughters of Prætus, King of Argos, were stricken with madness by Dionysus in consequence of their despising his worship. The King applied to Melampus for assistance in their recovery, which was effected by pursuing them, with shouting and singing, from Argos to Mount Sicyon.

“OH! struggle! sweet as to the mountaineer  
The breasting of a skyward-towered height,  
Where wild, familiar winds come rushing down,  
Like foes to turn him from their fastnesses,  
And still he presses upward, upward still,  
Divining the victorious end of toil,  
The high, deep silences against the blue!”

Thus I, Melampus, sang as on we sped  
Toward the mountain-goal of Sicyon;  
And, still pursuing, still more clearly sang,

“’Tis victory that shall requite our toil!  
Know this, ye men of Argolis, ye sons  
Of heroes who at Colchis did the deed;  
Whose god-like hearts sprang upward to the skies,  
When o’er the sea the lyre’s wild music swept

Their pæans of fearless greeting to the foe!  
Sing now, as victors sing! the end is good!  
E'en now they faintlier run, they droop, they lag!  
Iphianassa there! behold, she lags!  
Lysippe wearies, wearies of the way,  
And sweet Iphinoë for ever droops;  
Ye gods, because upon my heart I bear  
The woe of divination, I foreknow  
Amid what fadeless flowers she shall rest  
For ever from the anguish of this day!  
Content thee, King, for thou hast seen thy last  
Of her sweet eyes: three daughters fled from thee,  
And two come home once more the morrow-morn;  
And lo, the end is good!" Yea, thus I sang,  
And all about me cried, "The end is good!"  
And still pursuing, once again I sang,  
    "Is not the scorn revenged? now stay thy hand;  
Thine, Dionysus, is their reverence,  
And the first sacrifice unto thy name  
The blood of this land's helpless infancy!  
But for the end, what woe, what woe were ours!"  
And all about me cried, "The end is good!"  
And hasted evermore; and evermore  
The women fled before our flying feet  
O'er mead and rock, o'er stream and tangled bank,  
Past leafy refuges of frightened birds,  
Past fragrant haunts of nodding flow'rs, still on,  
And knew not any beauty of the earth

For the wild madness of their darkened souls.  
And as with song and shout we hasted by,  
Behold! they lagged, and fell, and rose again,  
And, staggering toward the goal, perceived  
Within their souls the glimmer of a light  
That flooded all the present pain with shame;  
Then, at the foot of Sicyon, turned round  
To front us with their faint, exhausted looks,  
And lo! within their tired eyes we saw  
Reason again, and knew the deed was done!  
And the just gods took sweet Iphinoë.

Then once again I sang, "Behold her dead!  
O blest is she who hath attained her rest;  
Who 'mid the hills and dales Elysian  
Wand'reth, and knoweth not of night or day,  
Or chilly barrenness of nature's want,  
Desire unfulfilled or joy delayed;  
Who hath received the All of Hope and Love,  
And 'mid a fadeless glory of content  
Divines the Presence of Supremest Rest.

Ah! blest is she; belovèd of the gods!"

And they about me cried, "Just are the gods!"  
And once again I sang, "The end is good!  
Though some may weep, and some may yearn for death  
To end this agony of weariness,  
And some may recollect their motherhood,  
And know the empty home, the murdered ones  
Whose faintest cry was a be'lovèd sound;

And some may lay them down with breaking hearts,  
And wish the end had been no less than death!  
But the great gods are just! Unto the true  
From out life's failures springs a wider trust!  
Lo! sorrows are just blessings of the gods,  
Divinely sent, lest we forget and fail,  
And miss the full reward of perfect rest  
Death gives unto endurance to the end!"

And all with tears cried out, "The gods are just!"  
And laid them down, and rested, and rose up,  
And passed again in silence to their homes!

# ANTIGONE.

## ARGUMENT.

When Œdipus, in despair at the fate that had driven him to murder his father and marry his mother, had put out his eyes and been expelled from Thebes, he was guided to Attica by his daughter, Antigone. After her father's death Antigone returned to Thebes, where she found that her two brothers, Polynices and Eteocles, had killed each other in single combat while struggling for the vacant throne. Their interment having been forbidden by Creon, the succeeding king, Antigone alone ventured to defy the impious command, and buried the body of Polynices. She was in consequence condemned to be shut up in a cave, whereupon she killed herself. Her lover, Hæmon, son of Creon, hearing of her death, slew himself at her side.

O MELANCHOLY life of fated woe!  
O miserable death! How like a bird,  
That, prisoned from the skies, against the bars  
Beats its soft wings and cares not for the hurt,  
Could I against these dark, unlovely walls  
Despoil myself of tender womanhood!  
But faint am I with all this weight of woe,  
Too faint to strive, to struggle against Death!  
Too faint for aught save here to sit and wait—  
A weak, wan misery—approaching doom!

And yet I am not utterly unblest,  
In that no sin hath earned such suffering.  
Hapless are they who hold not in their hearts  
A higher law than e'er divined by man ;  
And though the words were uttered by the King,  
A knowledge kinglier far from me constrained  
That pitiful last service unto Death.  
And he is buried now ! Yea, for the bond  
Of brotherhood and home between our lives,  
The far-off, childish days, I did the deed  
That gave him gentle burial at the last !  
Ah ! how are these knees worn ! how these thin hands !  
All night, unweariedly, I toiling knelt  
Until no more the terrible, dead Thing  
Was seen ; no more that ashen, loveless face,  
Whereon so deep the sculptor-hand of death  
Had graven its hard lines of bitter hate.  
Then lo ! the end ; for they, who at their posts  
So long contentedly had slept, awoke,  
And seized me thence to bring me here to die !  
O miserable Death ! And I so young,  
So unaccustomed to those things of life  
That young hearts love to waken to, and feel  
The trembling eyelids of their being uplift  
To front the shining gaze of happiness.  
So young ! so young ! and oh ! so far away  
From those to whom the end of days might be  
An end acceptable ! through weariness

Of disappointments, and the things of life  
That dull the first, ideal colouring ;  
Those silent griefs that crown the royal brows  
Of beautiful Endurance ; the wan pain  
That moves the fretted soul to long for death,  
For Hades ! and its sombre quietudes ;  
And unattainable, disturbless heights  
Whence gods look down upon the striving throng !  
But I am young ; I could have loved my life,  
And even now, so near its bitter end,  
Take comfort to myself in blessed dreams  
Of all the faint and scanty tastes of joy  
Rounded to days of perfect loveliness.  
Now joy no more for me ! Now nevermore  
Those first, sweet lights that shone upon my heart,  
The sun-glow ; and the happy eyes of eve  
That watched me thread the tender olive groves ;  
The warm, clear waters lapping 'gainst my throat,  
As, trembling at mine own eyes on myself,  
I slipped my shining raiment and slid down  
Amid the naiads within the secret pool ;  
To hear no more bird-melodies of joy,  
That, as the day wore into dewy eve,  
To silence sank, as notes from Orpheus' lyre  
Still ever faintlier breathed across the sea  
Her heroes' last farewell to Argolis !  
Now nevermore to meet the eyes of love !  
Alas ! ye gods, this hunger of my heart,

Beyond all craving of these hapless lips  
For bread and water to once more renew  
My famished strength ; this yearning, over-brimmed  
With hopelessness of hope ; and longing love  
Sick with mute sadness and the certainty  
Of endless separation. I loved him !  
That god-like Hæmon ! Though the curse was mine,  
And wedded days of measureless content  
Might never merge my soul within his soul ;  
And the soft touches of his children's hands  
Could never crown my years with motherhood,  
I loved him ! At the first, divining not  
Fate's dark Erinnyes over-shading all,  
Love gave to us his priceless gifts of love ;  
Unquestioning surrender unto joy,  
Communings, and the tender nearnesses  
Of hand to hand and trembling lip to lip ;  
Yet as I clearer apprehended Fate,  
Apart I passed, and held my life aloof,  
Lest it should draw his too beneath the curse.  
But with the outward breaking of a bond  
Love does not always cease ; nor is it dead  
Because still silences possess its place ;  
Nay ; rather like the flower thro' winter days,  
In darkling quiet it renews itself  
Beyond all former beauty, till the time  
When, to perfection come, it pierces earth  
And sees the high, illimitable blue.

So love the fuller filled my aching days,  
And when the king, his father, bade us part,  
Diverse and mute we went, and, stranger-like,  
Passed by ungreeting ; while, unstranger-like,  
The stolen glances, sweeter for being stol'n,  
Traversed the unseen paths 'tween heart and heart  
And thrilled the inmost centre of my being.  
But far apart and seldom came to us  
Such landmarks o'er the weary stretch of days,  
And now no more ! I know he joyed in them,  
And will be sad to miss my little life  
And tremulous endeavour of these eyes  
To breathe the passion of their love to him.  
Ah ! deepest pang to me of death and woe !  
No more to labour in his life's behalf !  
For what is Love, and all of Life to Love,  
Unless to it be giv'n to minister  
In services of love ? to know some part—  
Most blest the larger part—itself hath spent  
In faithful deeds towards some other life ?  
Hath set alight its own self-sacrifice,  
And seen the soul rise nearer to the gods  
For that perception of the link that holds  
All, everywhere, within its wide, warm reach ?  
I know he will be sad, and yet no more  
Can I prevail in ministry to him ;  
For all the tender, passing things that make  
The sum of life's sweet service, end in death—

And I so faint, so desolate am left,  
That to myself I seem no more than Death  
Lost in mortality and seeking home !  
O refuge ! o'er the restlessness I yearn,  
And, child-like, wearied out with little life,  
Lie down and sob myself to dreamless sleep !

## THAMYRIS.

### ARGUMENT.

A bard of Thrace, who, presuming to surpass the Muses in song, was deprived of his sight and the power of singing.

O BROKEN-HEARTED one! No more to spend  
The thought in song as free as that of birds  
That fill the flower-months with melody.  
Blind as Tiresias! than him more sad!  
Having no golden staff to lead me right,  
No favour from the gods to soothe this ache!  
How could a mortal think to breathe a strain  
Divinely musical as that which touched  
The heart of Heav'n and earth; for which the sea,  
The rivers hushed themselves? Ah! hapless thought!  
How could a mortal strive to reach such heights,  
Nor suffer for the deed? Lo! sorrow fell  
On those, ere me, who fronted the vain wish:  
Fate, inexorable as now, from every brow  
Took off its royal crown of womanhood,  
And voiceless left each heart to bear its woe  
Of alien, unknown nativity.

This I forgot ; and how, whilst every maid  
Against the voices of the Sacred Nine  
Lifted fain notes, great Theia veiled her eyes,  
And darkness palpable fell over earth.  
This I forgot ! And all the afterwoe  
Of punishment ; the painful suffering,  
The loss of tenderer humanity,  
The mournful ways, and weary stretch of wings  
Unto those marshy wastes where clanging cranes  
'Mid desolation lived ! This I forgot,  
Or deemed my gift above all other gifts  
From hands immortal unto mortals giv'n ;  
A joy imperishable, Love and Light,  
More pure, more high, more full of wide content,  
And natural outpouring of all thought  
Than those clear notes whose careless triumph shook  
The listening silences of Helicon ;  
For as I sang, it seemed that I perceived  
The flowers of Olympus in the path,  
Their deathless dewdrops lave my mortal feet,  
To strengthen them unto still freer heights ;  
The gods, approving, round me listening leant,  
And I, sublime in thus achieving good,  
Feared not to face their mute sublimity !  
So, rapt in unrealities, I sang ;  
With face uplifted, as a summer bird  
Touched by some topmost joy of joy ; glad eyes  
Half-wet with too deep tenderness of thought ;

Lips tremulous, whence music, unaware  
Of all save rapture of expression, sprang  
To speech unlimited ; and as I sang,  
Earth I forgot, and Fame, desirèd once,  
And listening Deities ; all falsenesses,  
All little aims, all weaker purposes ;  
And, only knowing that my human heart  
Held something more than human, poured it forth  
In that untaught simplicity that breathes  
Most perfect feeling ! Happiness was mine !  
When lo ! but scarce aware of such content,  
A sudden blackness fell upon my soul,  
And struck me ever into songless grief,  
And sightless melancholy of despair !  
Dumb ! blind ! alas ! woe, woe ; dumb ! blind ! I stood  
And groped for thought, until, with dull, slow sense,  
I heard the by-ward trailing of soft robes,  
The rhythmic treading of immortal feet  
Come near, pass on, and die away from sound,  
Till silence and the vasty solitude  
With a great horror whelmed me, for behold !  
The Sacred Nine had left me to my woe !  
O hapless lot ! They suffer who would climb  
Beyond the heights apportioned to calm life ;  
Those sovran heights given to few to reach,  
Where bitter-sweet of isolation broods,  
Companionèd for ever, yet alone !  
They suffer who forego contented Thought

To strive, and if to fail, ah ! yet to strive,  
Though with the anguish of a yearning soul  
That sees, and knows, and feels the higher joy,  
Far-off, far-off, and scarce to be attained.  
Oh ! solitary times of foiled delight !  
Yet sweeter those—with the rewarded hours  
Of fancies, lovely as Acanthus flow'rs,  
And voices, breathing music so divine,  
So sweet, that, o'er the touch of earth, the soul  
Hangs tremulous, as perfect tears of joy  
Upon the perfect eyelids of a god—  
Than the unquestioning content of thought  
That struggles not to reach the awful stars !  
Beyond my lot of happiness I yearned  
And fell to woe. Unutterable pain !  
In even-tones of common speech this voice  
Drones on ; and still within my soul I feel  
Song throb ! How animate, how strong, how sweet !  
With yearning melody o'er these heart-strings  
It wells ; and, sea-like 'gainst earth's rocky front,  
Entreating sobs and will not be denied.  
Alas ! dumb heart that may not ever sing,  
Dumb soul that may not ever see again !  
How are the portals to contentment closed,  
And I abandoned by the saving gods,  
And broken-hearted as the lyre that fell  
In shattered beauty from my nerveless hand !

## THE LAST RIDE OF JUANINA.

Forth rode Juanina !  
And her gallant horse's feet,  
With their steady, rhythmic beat,  
Was the only sound that stirred  
Through the brooding summer heat.

Not a bird found heart to sing,  
Not a leaf, on lightest wing,  
E'er so timidly disturbed  
Nature's breathless slumbering.

Forth rode Juanina !  
Down into the forest deep,  
To the very soul of sleep,  
Till a thrill of pity stirred  
Heart of leaflet, flower, and bird,  
And the winds arose to pray  
Such a fair, young life away,  
"Juanina, ~  
Haste away !"

Still with rising fear to pray,  
    "Gallop, Juanina!  
Gallop for your life away!"

    Hold him, Juanina!  
Was it Hell that seemed to roar,  
Behind, beside, above, before!  
    Flashing forks of blazing fire,  
    Winds that circled higher, higher;  
Storm-drops beating, like hard hands  
Importunate in their demands!

    Hold him, Juanina!  
His bloodshot eyes with horror start,  
Fear's madresses seize on his heart.  
His ears lie straight against his neck,  
Foam-splashes hither, thicker fleck  
The straining cords of leg and chest!

    Juanina,  
Downward lean upon your breast,  
Lower, lower, lower yet!  
There is many a groaning bough  
Fain to touch your soft, white brow.

    Juanina, lower yet!  
And you can not? Hold your breath,  
One prayer, one sigh, and this is Death,  
    Juanina!

Ah ! earth is so still again !  
Only here and there some leaf,  
With soft petulance of grief,  
Shakes its silver fringe of rain ;  
And a low wind 'mid the trees  
Sobs its saddest melodies ;  
And a song-bird down the wood,  
Flying, flying, flying,  
Lights and sings in raptured mood  
Its ineffable delight ;  
Lights, and sings, and troubles not  
Lest it wake you from your sleep,  
Juanina ;  
Lying, lying, lying,  
In a slumber far more deep,  
Than the stars of any night  
Ever saw you sleep before,  
Juanina !

Nay, you will not ride again,  
Juanina !  
Quietly, he, at your side,  
Waits for some low word to chide ;  
Waits for your soft hands' caress  
To dispel the loneliness !  
Waits, with patience stood apart,  
Till some vague, unsolaced pain,  
Some deep instinct breaks his heart,  
Juanina !

## A WOODLAND WALK.

It was Midsummer-time ; a golden day  
Whereon it seemed the floodgates of the sun  
Were opened wide for every nook of earth  
To feel Heav'n's wide beneficence of warmth :  
The flowers, like unflinching baby-eyes,  
Gazed upward through the breathless interspace ;  
The birds, scarce piping, drowsed upon the bough,  
And dallying slipped the streamlet on its way.  
And through the wood I walked with Juditha,  
And as we went, in low and thoughtful tones,  
She sang to me a little song I loved.

It is the merry mead-month,  
When rustic roses bloom ;  
And oh ! the heart o' sycamores  
Is full o' scented gloom ;  
And rarely hang the golden lobes  
Upon the fragrant broom !

It is the merry mead-month,  
The grass falls 'neath the blade,

And oh ! the heart o' every bird  
Sleeps silent in the shade,  
And lightly rings the careless laugh  
From hay-time man and maid !

It is the merry mead-month ;  
Would, would that it might be  
As sweet a month to every one  
As 'tis to you and me !  
God comfort all unhappy hearts  
Since this thing cannot be !

Then silence fell, and down the leafy aisle,  
Like spirit-choristers, soft winds went by ;  
And from the censer-cup of nature rose  
Many a subtle fragrance ; and content  
With silence wandered we, till once again  
She, with sweet pathos, lingered o'er a song ;

'Twas yesternight, 'twas yesternight,  
A year ago, my mother died ;  
There was not one to care for me,  
Not one less apt to love than chide ;  
Oh ! long I wept ; long, long I wept,  
Where I could chance unnoticed creep ;  
For may not e'en a beggar-maid  
Both love and weep ?

'Twas yesternight, 'twas yesternight,  
A year ago, I crouched and wept;  
But ere an hour had worn away,  
O God! how happily I slept;  
No lady e'er could sweetlier rest  
'Mid down, and lace, and silken gleam;  
No lady in the land e'er dreamt  
A sweeter dream!

I saw my mother stand by me  
In trailing robes of shining white,  
With wings of dazzling loveliness  
That filled the dreary dark with light;  
Her face had grown so beautiful,  
It drew the slow tears from mine eyes,  
The longing tears to be with her  
Above the skies!

She laid her hand upon my hand,  
She drew my head against her breast,  
"Ah! now, my child, my child," she said,  
"Content thyself with perfect rest!  
Thou art no more, no more alone;  
Thou may'st not hear, thou may'st not see,  
But I am evermore with thee,  
My child, with thee!

And that thou should'st remember this,  
And ease sad life with memory,

From out thy place in Paradise  
Behold ! what Christ hath sent to thee !”  
She kissed me on my chilly lips,  
Her white wings faded o’er the land ;  
I woke, and found a holy flow’r  
Within my hand !

And as she ceased, lo ! from a neighbour bough  
A blackbird whistled shrill, and stopped, as ’twere  
Ashamed too rudely to awake the calm,  
So, once again, with a subdued delight,  
Began its low and sweet soliloquy,  
And chaunted on, with softness to the end,  
Then preened each glossy wing, and flying left  
The quiet more apparent to our hearts.  
And I, “ Oh ! rarest of God’s woodland bards !  
How many centuries of troubled souls  
Have eased themselves by list’ning to such strains !  
Who knows but that, in far-off, classic days,  
The dauntless blackbird piped its rustic lay  
Sweetly as Pan his reeds Arcadian ?  
That many an one—thence by grim Charon rowed,  
Disconsolate, unto the myrtle groves—  
Less freely wept, for noting its rare song ;  
Poor Phyllis, ’plaining tardy Demophon ;  
Or she, around whose loved one’s grave the elms  
For ever grew, for ever died again  
What time their climbing boughs caught sight of Troy !

Demeter might less sadly walk her meads ;  
And Orpheus sing unto his lyre again,  
Remembering submissively the Dead !  
But I will e'en repay your minstrelsy.

Eurydice ! Eurydice !

If thou from Hades hearest me,  
O plead with pale Persephone !  
Breathe unto her of mead and rill,  
The fragrance of the daffodil  
Crushed 'neath her feet, when she was still  
A little maid in Sicily !

Implore her by my love, my longing,  
The passionate thoughts perpetual thronging' !  
Implore her by each sacred god,  
Each Muse that steps Parnassus-sod !  
Implore her by Hell's awful river,  
The thunders of the Supreme Giver !  
Implore her by sweet memory—  
Yea, the sweet sake of memory—  
That thou may'st come again to me,  
Eurydice ! Eurydice !

Could I have loved thee better, Sweet ?

Nay, from the bright length of each hair,  
Unto the fairness of thy feet,  
Thou wast to me beyond compare !

Day after day what I to thee  
Thou wast a thousand-fold to me!  
Night after night, when at thy side  
    Beneath the happy stars I slept,  
Oh! beautiful, my bride, my bride!  
    My heart, undrowsing, ever kept  
Its watch of utmost love o'er thee,  
    Eurydice! Eurydice!

Thou can'st not hear, thou can'st not hear,  
    Or thou would'st cast Death's wan disguise,  
And pierce the fearful silences  
    To answer my imploring cries!  
    Eurydice, Eurydice!  
I break my heart for love of thee,  
    Eurydice! Eurydice!

Then she—"It is too sad! too deep with pain;  
No blackbird there has wiled away his grief!"  
And I—"Content you! This next song shall be  
Of yon soft southern clime, where thrushes fly  
With busy zeal to help the vintagers!"

Not here, my fellow-Romans! Look not here!  
Stretch to some other eager foot and arm!  
Back! back! Touch not the shadow of her hair,  
Or rose-flushed hollow of her tender palm!  
    For Thalassius! For Thalassius!

What are these lips that you should long to touch?

No redder than your own; and ah! what woe  
Writ in their tender curves. Grieve not! wait; see  
How future days this present pain forego!

For Thalassius! For Thalassius!

Crowd not; make room! The fire dies from her face;

Her eyes, like stars o'er-blinded by the rain,  
Are hid. Poor little lids weighed down with tears,  
Grief comes, grief goes, thou'lt lift and smile again!

For Thalassius! For Thalassius!

Grieve not! thy kith, thy kin is here! To-day

Fair Sabines mate with us! Hush thy regret,  
Anon thou'lt love, in that the woman's heart

All other pain and parting can forget!

For Thalassius! For Thalassius!

Not here! not here! Romans, nought here for you!

She weeps!—weep not, to-day thou art a bride,  
And beautiful, and soon to be beloved!

Thalassius for thee; thy chance is wide!

For Thalassius! For Thalassius!

Then she—"I like and like it not! No sound  
Of southern clime, of happy birds is there;

No sight of vines about that baby-Rome!

Nay, I can give a sweeter song than you."

From the land of Memory  
Wandering she went,  
All the stars made melody  
In God's firmament.

Through a mist of tender light  
Vale and woodland shone,  
Smiling went she, at the sight,  
As she looked thereon.

From the land of Memory  
Called he on her name,  
Weeping soft and silently,  
Hasting back, she came.

“And yet again, if you will choose to hear.”

It was the very heart o' days,  
When woodbines stilly bud and bloom,  
And golden primroses of eve,  
With beauty fill the starless gloom ;  
We walked across the daisied mead,  
Just you and I, just you and I,  
And overhead, far overhead,  
A woodlark singing 'gainst the sky.

The streamlet, babbling on its way,  
Now rose to sound, to silence died ;

We crossed the little bridge, and still  
Went loit'ring, loit'ring by its side ;  
Just you and I, just you and I,  
And down upon the daisied lea  
The happy lark that, lighting, spent  
Its last, sweet sob of melody !

Ah ! love, how careless were we twain !  
We only felt the Summer-day  
Enfold us with an influence  
More sweet than any words can say ;  
With wayward interchange of thought,  
How careless went we happy twain !  
Thank God ! divining not the time  
When we should meet no more again !

“ Now you will wearied be ! Canary-liké,  
Made eager by surrounding circumstance,  
I seem to sing against the very winds,  
Careless of all save free delight of joy !  
But daylight wears to dusk ; anon the heart,  
Like Egypt's god of silence—to the lip  
The warning finger of profoundest thought—  
Shall voiceless muse, contented with the calm.  
Anon the eve shall shed her influence,  
Grateful as dew unto the thirsty flow'rs,  
And we in ever deeper quiet pass,

Divining the white Angel Presences  
That closer watch the helpless hours of dark !  
Now can you beat those little songs of mine ?”  
And I, “ Nay, you shall say !” and sang again—

My heart's to me a garden,  
Oh ! so rare ; oh ! so sweet ;  
My soul at the gate stands warden  
'Gainst the tread of careless feet.

My thoughts for her are flowers,  
Her love is the life of each,  
Her tears the tender showers,  
The sunshine, her smiles and speech.

She paces 'mid the roses,  
The pansies and mignonette ;  
Where the heliotrope uncloses  
Its fragrant violet.

A tall white lily reaches,  
Grown beautiful and apart ;  
Oh ! listen, love, what it teaches  
As it leans against thy heart !

Oh ! listen, my belovèd,  
Its words are these thoughts of mine ;  
Oh ! listen, my belovèd,  
Till my thoughts are thoughts of thine.

Lean low ! lean low ! oh ! warden !  
Bid the careless feet begone ;  
The love that dwells in my garden  
Is the love of two made one !

And when I ceased, no other words were said,  
But Home we loitered, silent loitered we,  
And when I looked upon her face, and saw  
Its downcast tenderness of solemn thought,  
Behold ! I knew she gazed along the months,  
And felt the end, so sad, so beautiful,  
Wherein her heart for ever should resign  
Its sacred dearnesses of liberty.  
And the sun fell, and in the shining arch  
Clouds, crocus-coloured as the festive-gowns  
Of Attic maids at their Brauronia,  
Motionless faded ; homeward flew the rooks,  
And the pale moon her dewy fingers laid  
Upon the tired eyelids of the day.

# TELEMACHUS.

## ARGUMENT.

An Asiatic monk and martyr caused the gladiatorial combats at Rome to be banished. In the year 404 A.D., in the midst of the amphitheatre spectacles, he rushed into the arena and tried to separate the gladiators. The spectators in the first moment of exasperation stoned him to death. He was proclaimed a martyr by the Emperor Honorius, who soon abolished the combats.

HE cares not for you ! Hurl your hardest ; do your worst ;

Curse with more unction now than ever you have cursed ;

Account it noble, tender women, to have thrown,  
With ready zeal of rage, the merest dole of stone,  
And glory to have struck him ! 'Tis nigh done ! Did'st  
heed

How, swifter than the Thracian prince's snow-white  
steed,

And straighter than the arrow to its mark, he sped ?  
And 'tween the wrestling creatures pressed hands, feet,  
and head,

Imploring arms, and cries that tried the heart-strings, so  
Brimful were they of almost more than human woe !

He might have been a god, immortal, free from death,  
So fearlessly he faced it! With hard-bated breath  
One minute there we sat. Mute, as a stricken bird,  
Each watcher forward leant; no silken garment stirred  
Above the fragrant heaving of a woman's breast;  
The dallying hands were still; impatient feet at rest;  
Soft glances frozen to a horrible, wide stare,  
Smiles hardened to a grin, laughs on the vacant air  
Died, mocking at themselves! Life hung suspended o'er  
That unit in the wide arena, then, once more  
Relaxing, spent its gathered strength in such a cry  
As tears the throat of Hell! Thou foolish monk! to try  
And balk the wild beasts of their lawful prey! See how  
The flame of hate burns white on wrathful lips, eyes,  
brow;

Hear the shrill tumult clamour nearer round his life!  
He cares not! Still upon the gladiator's strife  
Presses unfaltering; flings his poor, puny strength,  
Straining against the knotted arms, and corded length  
Of hard, withstanding limb. What is his hand to them?  
The passing touch of some frail woman's garment hem  
Would move them more! He speaks! hot words of  
holy grace

That die unheard amid the thunder of the place.  
Great drops of sweat roll down his anxious brow,  
worn, meek,

And sad. What is't? A stone! it marked him on  
the cheek,

And now again, again! See how they part and fly  
Who strove before him! Thick as hail through  
thunder-sky

The whistling missiles speed. See the bent form.  
And still these hungry Romans scream and rage and  
swarm,

Like carrion birds about a putrid feast! He sinks,  
O horrid sight! O horrid sound! Thud, thud, that  
drinks

One's strength away. He sinks, he falls!

Amid the crowd,

The Emperor lifts his hand, signs quiet, speaks, and  
loud

All lips applaud his words, "The monk just dead,  
acquaint

The world, we do requite with reverence as a saint!"

## A BALLAD OF LOVE AND DEATH.

Who is it at the outer door  
With finger-touch so slight?  
She passes through or passes o'er,  
I cannot see aright;  
She passes up the darkened house,  
Herself her only light.

For she is clothed in shining white  
That lightens up the stair,  
Clothed whitely from her chilly neck  
Unto her feet so bare,  
Which shine as cold as the river-drops  
That hang about her hair.

There is no echo of her step,  
No creak beneath her tread;  
She goes where all is strange to her,  
As though a lover led,  
And her face is grey and pallid as  
The face of one just dead.

She pauses at the chamber door,  
She passes through to find;  
Each footstep o'er the rugless floor  
Leaves a wet print behind;  
She shakes with silent sobs as though  
She shook beneath a wind.

He holds deep dreams beneath his lids,  
He does not hear or wake;  
Far off, he dreams, she waits for him,  
Where happier mornings break;  
Far off he speeds, they meet and sit  
Where silver aspens shake.

She lays her chilly face to his,  
He clasps her in his sleep;  
Across his eyes that dream and smile  
Her tears and sighings creep;  
He clasps her close and starts awake  
To hear her weep, and weep.

"Nay, sweet," he cries, cheek close to cheek,  
"Nay, sweet, and what is this?"  
"I could not die," she moans to him,  
"Without a parting kiss;  
My spirit cannot leave the world  
Without your parting prayer;

My spirit cannot pass," she moans,  
"Tho' my body's lying there!"

He's kissed her on her weeping eyes,  
He's kissed her on her lips,  
He's kissed her on her shining hair  
' Whence the chill water drips,  
And softly between every kiss  
A word of praying slips.

"The river was more dark," she moans,  
"Than your dark eyes, my love;  
And whiter even than your face  
The moon was white above;  
More swiftly than your kisses, love,  
My feet slid through the grass,  
The water drowned my breath away,  
But my spirit could not pass.

The wild winds tore, the great tree shook,  
I clung against its branch,  
The great tree cracked, it met the wave  
Like a cruel avalanche;  
The waters clasped me like your arms,  
They bubbled at my lips,  
They chilled me cold, they chilled me dead,  
Unto my finger-tips;  
Feel, love, how cold and dead I am,  
See how the water drips.

I could not smile and live, my love,  
Since first I heard them tell,  
That we should be as far apart  
As Heav'n's height is from Hell;  
But I could not die in quiet, love,  
Without your kiss and prayer;  
My spirit strove to you for that,  
Though my body's lying there.  
Now swifter than my feet that slid  
So swiftly through the grass,  
From your warm arms and kiss and prayer  
I feel my spirit pass."

His empty arms fall to his breast,  
His kiss comes back no more;  
One pallid ray of moonlight falls  
Across the silent floor;  
He sees the footprints, dark and wet,  
Lead to the fastened door.

They lead him down the gloomy stair,  
And o'er the threshold space;  
Adown the fields, amid the grass  
They leave a shining trace;  
They lead him where the great tree lies  
Across the river-place,  
She rocks amid the floating leaves  
With a smile on her drownèd face!

## PERSEPHONE'S SONGS.

### FROM SICILY.

#### I.

“Through the dewy morn I go.”

THROUGH the dewy morn I go  
With my maidens fair and sweet,  
Blue above, and golden glow  
Of daffodillies at our feet.  
While the birds with folded wing  
Dream a sleepy melody,  
And the syrens softly sing  
On the shore of Sicily!

Thou art fair as Time is old,  
Thou art fragrant by the rills,  
And my gown is touched with gold  
From thy kisses, daffodils!  
While the birds, with waking wing,  
'Gin a tender melody,

And the syrens sweetly sing  
On the shore of Sicily!

As thou lov'st me, come away,  
I will leave no flow'r forlorn,  
Some of thee I'll take to-day,  
Some of thee to-morrow morn!  
Oh! the birds, with troubled wing,  
Pipe a mournful melody;  
And the syrens sadly sing  
On the shore of Sicily!

## II.

“When a lover comes to me.”

When a lover comes to me,  
In Sicily, in Sicily!  
We will walk beside the sea  
To hear the syren's melody;  
We will fragrant Hybla climb  
To watch the bees amid the thyme;  
With daffodillies in one hand  
We will loiter o'er the land,  
In Sicily, in Sicily!

Daffodils might fill each hand  
In Sicily, in Sicily,

But that, ah ! I understand  
A far sweeter maiden's whim,  
The other shall be held by him,  
As we loiter o'er the land  
In Sicily, in Sicily !

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## FROM HADES.

## I.

" I dreamt of a lover."

I dreamt of a lover,  
Oh ! spare me, oh ! spare me !  
Away from my mother,  
Dark king, would you bear me ?  
Kiss me not, love me not, clasp not my hand,  
Desolate, desolate, lieth the land !

Though with you for ever,  
I am not your bride !  
Though leant close together,  
Oh ! the distance is wide !  
Let me forth, let me forth, like a bird o'er the lea,  
My mother is seeking and weeping for me !

## II.

“Behold ! amid the Shadows dim !

Behold ! amid the Shadows dim,  
I sit beside their dark-browed king ;  
I weep, yet never think of him,  
For over earth awakes the Spring ;  
And oh ! with breaking heart I know  
The daffodils of Enna blow !

Would, would I were a maiden now,  
As in those far-off, golden days,  
The vivid sunshine on my brow,  
My footprints left 'mid dewy ways,  
Where, oh ! with breaking heart I know  
The daffodils of Enna grow !

“I know not, know not, what I would.”

I know not, know not, what I would,  
So sad, so desolate am I ;  
A mournful soul of alien ways  
I droop beneath the shining sky,  
What time the Spring-days beckon me  
Back to my mother's Sicily.

No more birds' songs I joy to hear,  
No flowers can I love again,  
The vivid light mocks at my woe,  
The sunshine pierces me with pain ;  
Behold ! I am too sad a thing  
For Nature's happy summering !

Better amid these Shades to sit,  
These colourless and scentless flow'rs ;  
Better amid unsmiling brows  
To wear away the weary hours !  
I have forgotten how to be  
A happy maid of Sicily !

## A HUNTING BALLAD.

“It’s oh ! my bonny mare, my bonny, bonny mare,  
The wind from the South knows the quiver of thy mouth,  
And the clouds o’er the sky know the brightness of  
thine eye,

As thy heart beats wild and hotly for a-hunting ;  
And it’s neither here nor there if my soul be dull  
with care,

For the ugly, black dog flies when I look into thine eyes,  
And know we two together go a-hunting.

“It’s oh ! my bonny mare, my bonny, bonny mare,  
We’ll be off and away through the soft morn dull  
and grey,

Through the grassy summer lanes, turning brown with  
autumn rains,

To the common where the gorse was once a-yellow ;  
And there they all will come, some chatting and  
some mum,

With the spurs a-clank, a-clink, and the young bucks  
dressed in pink,

And the time-worn hands in garments aged and mellow ;  
And there we two shall wait with our hot hearts both  
elate,

And for all that I can say, 't may be right for thee to  
pray

The "find" may be some tough, long-winded fellow !

"It's oh ! my bonny mare, my bonny, bonny mare,  
I could kiss thee 'tween thine eyes, where the velvet  
white star lies,

For the human tenderness of thy gentle look's caress,  
Ere thou and I together go a-hunting ;

And my heart in time shall beat to the music of thy feet,  
When the hunter's moon 'gins burn at the hour of our  
return,

Together, both together, from a-hunting !"

He sang it blithe and gay, that early Autumn day,  
As strong and dark he rode on the gallant mare that  
strode

To the cover where the gorse was once a-yellow ;  
And off, off, and away ! at the foxhound's mellow bay,  
No one as he that day rode half so straight away

At the heels of that old, tough, long-winded fellow !

The low wind of the South blew on the mare's soft  
mouth,

The glimmer of the sky lit in her flashing eye

As her heart it beat in rhythm with her rider ;  
But she did it at the last when the village street was  
    passed ;  
She did it at the bank where the boldest 'mid them  
    shrank  
To see her stagger up from a crushed form stretched  
    beside her !

No more, no more he'll ride, at the early morning-tide,  
    When the dew is still on grass and flower lying ;  
No more, no more he'll turn, when the early stars  
    'gin burn,  
And the even-winds of Autumn soft are sighing ;  
No more, no more he'll hear the hunter's horn sound  
    clear,  
And woods and hills reiterate the calling ;  
No more, no more he'll wist his bonny mare can list  
    The words of love that from his lips were falling :  
But well I know if now the warmth came to his brow,  
    And he could have one wish for death's beguiling,  
He'd kiss her 'tween her eyes, where the velvet white  
    star lies,  
. And fall asleep contented, calm and smiling !

## IN ARCADIA.

### I.

#### PAN PIPING.

PAN piping in Arcadia,  
His syrinx to his lips,  
And on it, lightly up and down,  
His dancing finger-tips!  
Oh! trip it, trip it, trip it,  
Come oreads, light and fair,  
Come naiads, and trip it there,  
With the rushes 'mid your hair,  
In sweet Arcadia.

Though dewy dusk steps down the hill,  
And drowsy flocks go by,  
We'll dance no more before the sun,  
But 'neath a starry sky.  
So trip it, trip it, trip it,  
Come satyrs, dance your fill,  
Come gay nymphs, trip it still,  
For Pan is piping with a will  
In sweet Arcadia!

What matters flight of foolish time,  
Hushed birds and closing flow'rs ;  
What matters aught but happiness  
To fill the careless hours !  
Oh ! trip it, trip it, trip it,  
Come dryads, leave the tree,  
Come happy fauns, and happier be,  
For Pan is piping merrily  
In sweet Arcadia !

## II.

## PAN AND ECHO.

He leant, and piped an idle tune,  
Unwitting that she listened,  
And oh ! he played so tenderly,  
Tears on her eyelids glistened,  
And one, beyond her own command,  
Fell down upon the player's hand.

He turned, and lo ! another strain  
That all gay things resembled,  
And oh ! he piped so cunningly,  
Smiles on her young lips trembled,  
And one, too eager in its part,  
Fell down upon the player's heart.

## MOORLAND MEMORIES.

AMID the purple ling we lie ;  
A lark's flight nearer to the sky  
Than they who, in the busy street,  
With brows thought-weighted, pass and meet ;  
Such thought as here hath not its part,  
So much a knowledge fills the heart  
Of God's prevailing love and care,  
Of angel-wings that throng the air,  
And the upholding of that Hand  
By which our highest good is planned.  
Above us, happy hour by hour,  
Light as the rowan's feathery flow'r,  
Or downy plume on birdling's breast,  
The clouds, full-sail, scud from the West ;  
The shadows fly, now heath, now grass  
Feel their cool wing-prints as they pass,  
O'er crag, o'er dell, o'er babbling stream  
They glide as voiceless as a dream,  
Then climb the hill and dip from sight  
Toward the realms of earliest night.

Brown as elm-seed in latter May  
The poising hawk hangs o'er his prey ;  
The curlews, glancing low and high,  
Give forth their soft, pathetic cry ;  
The swallows, vocal flecks of joy,  
Forget the Autumn-time's alloy  
Of weary flights o'er trackless seas,  
And fierce, 'mid-ocean melodies ;  
The grouse brag loud ; and, oh ! Love, hark  
The passion of yon mounting lark,  
That, with its rare, wild minstrelsy  
Sings there,—so would I sing to thee—  
As though unto some chosen star,  
Or that, through Heav'n's gate slipped ajar,  
It deemed the Angels might be stirred  
To love to listen to a bird.  
How beautiful all nature now !  
With wide content of upturned brow,  
And listening looks of radiance,  
She seems, like patriot Joan of France,  
To hear, o'er her deep breaths of prayer,  
Heav'n's whispers tremble through the air.  
The valley, nestling at our feet,  
Where tenderest of colours meet,  
Opes wide and warm, serene and calm  
As that, thereafter, piercèd palm  
When to each child-like, faithful one  
It gave its loving benison.

Below the purpling heather-rim  
The brackens, straightly tall and slim,  
Under their wide-crowned greenness keep  
Soft quietudes of shade and sleep :  
Thence, lower still, come flowery spots  
Of hare-bells and forget-me-nots,  
Brown-blooming reeds, beloved of Pan,  
'Mid runlets, scarce a foot in span ;  
White orchis, poising soft and light  
As butterflies prepared for flight ;  
Shy daisy-maids in pink-tipped frills,  
And that dark rose that loves the hills,  
What time more rarely may be heard  
The hum of bee and song of bird.  
Yet, further down the cool incline,  
'Tis but a step to reach the kine,  
The farmstead and the rustic bridge,  
The ferns on either stream-bank's ridge,  
The silver gleams of leaping trout,  
And gnats that madly whirl about,  
Like they who, 'neath the linden tree,  
Went through their rustic revelry,  
When, sinless, up the neighbour-street  
Passed beautiful-faced Marguerite.  
So soon, profoundly hushed and dumb,  
The stilly even-tide hath come ;  
No voice disturbs, from hill or sod,  
This tender peace, so born of God !

The sun is set ; now into night  
Deepens each almond blossom light ;  
The cloudlets, flushed as maple-shoots,  
Or purple as the vineyard fruits,  
Now gloom, now pale, now steal away  
Like boats from out some sunny bay ;  
The stars grow clear ; and ah ! watch how  
Above yon sombre mountain-brow—  
That, solemn-faced as Memnon, sees  
The onward roll of centuries—  
The moon comes up ; now like the rim  
Of some rare, gold-lipped goblet brim,  
Held out in hail companionship  
By gods toward the mortal lip ;  
And now like some—as more and more  
Ascendant from the Eastern shore—  
Terra-celestial loveliness,  
Too full of Heav'n's height to express,  
And yet of earth so vocal-clear  
That, melting through the human-ear,  
It with its golden fingers starts  
The vesper-music of our hearts.  
So upward, its deep, tidal grace  
Thrilling the starry interspace,  
With motion most melodious  
It leans its steadfast looks on us,  
Even as they that Dante sings  
Who, with extended Angel-wings,

All night upon the dark heights kept  
Watch o'er each travelling soul that slept  
In Purgatory's circled pale  
Of slumber-silent, misty vale.  
Come down, come down! Thy name I lip,  
And dream of thy companionship,  
Though thou art far 'mid rich and poor,  
And I alone upon the moor,  
Where many a golden memory  
Associates itself with thee.  
'Twas here the happy hours I wiled,  
I lay and thought of thee, and smiled;  
Here, hill and dale before me spread,  
Thy written words I read, re-read,  
And every time of reading o'er  
Still found them sweeter than before;  
And there, I, months past our farewell,  
For many an hour, through many a Hell  
Of conflict, struggled to attain  
A Heav'n of calm content again!  
Ah! should we, tow'rd the end of days,  
Meet somewhere on our alien ways,  
How would it be? Would'st thou, o'er all  
Life since has borne, those days recall?  
Or wonder still to see arise  
The deathless passion in mine eyes?

## THE LYRE.

SEVEN were the strings of the lyre  
First fashioned, that filled  
The heart of the god with the thrilled  
And tempestuous desire.

Seven times over his fingers  
Sprang clear from the strings,  
And his soul was away on the wings  
Of earth's untroubled singers.

Seven times still the vibration  
With softness recurred,  
And his life to its centre was stirred  
By the trembling pulsation.

Then Apollo, the gracious and tender,  
"Give this unto me,  
And the gold rod of wealth unto thee,  
With my heart's love, I'll render."

And Hermes, the crafty and cunning,  
    "The thing is for thee,  
    If unto my Pan's-pipe and me  
The flocks shall come running!"

So, wandering off o'er the meadow  
    And pasturage sod,  
    Soft-stepped, went Apollo, the god,  
Through sun and through shadow.

With caressing of tremulous fingers,  
    Lit unto the strings;  
    And his soul was away on the wings  
Of earth's untroubled singers.

Seven were the strings of the lyre;  
    And they, 'neath his hand,  
    Breathed the spirit of ocean and strand,  
Of rainfall and fire.

The secrets of earth—primal mother  
    Of human and god—  
    And wild things that haunt sand and sod,  
Innate foes to each other.

The painless forth-bringing of flowers,  
    The song-life of birds,  
    The breathing of slumbering herds  
Through eve's dew-footed hours.

The sighing of sad, homeless zephyrs,  
The patter of rains,  
And over the pastoral plains  
The lowing of heifers.

They told of the fair, divine daughters,  
Virgin Athené,  
Heré, and white Aphrodite  
Born from foam of the waters.

They told of all life, love, and longing,  
A human may know ;  
Of speech, tender-trembling and low,  
With contented thought thronging.

Yea, of fancies too lovely to capture,  
Far off as the spheres,  
Till mortal and god wept hot tears  
Of ineffable rapture.

## MAIDEN SONGS.

### IONE.

THERE came a maiden over the sea,  
Who laid her touch upon my hand  
As she walked along o'er the golden sand,  
And looked at me ;  
Ione, Ione.

The light of the shimmering, summer sea  
Shone in her beautiful eyes ;  
I thought I was looking on Paradise  
For eternity ;  
Ione, Ione.

We walked by the tremulous summer sea ;  
All earth, all heav'n I then forgot,  
Past and present remembered not,  
Nor things to be ;  
Ione, Ione.

A white-winged boat came over the sea ;  
She hid her eyes, she loosed my hand,  
And stepped on board off the golden sand,  
And sailed from me ;  
Ione, Ione.

Across the waste of the moaning sea,  
Some one will wed her by-and-by,  
But that any could love her more than I  
Can never be,  
Ione, Ione !

---

## ELIZABETH.

She held a flower in her hand ;  
A mist of tears o'er-brimmed her eyes ;  
She answered me, half words, half sighs,—  
Both tender as a summer land,—

“This bud is all I have for thee,  
To seal our long companionships.”  
She put the flower to her lips,  
And reached it through the gloom to me.

I took it, trembling, in my hand,  
Her eyes with mine communing met,  
“And yet,” they breathed, “I love you yet ;  
I love you ! Can you understand ?”

Oh ! God, there is a higher good  
Than self's unquestioning happiness,  
Though reached unto with hard distress,  
And bitter to be understood !

---

DELIA.

Dear little Delia !  
With her laughter and her chatter,  
Her sweet, shy smiles and glances,  
And her wayward April-fancies !  
A rosebud maid was Delia,  
A bud that never would uncloze,  
Or let the petals slip apart  
Into the perfect open rose ;  
A rose-bud that was tip-kissed up  
Above the pink corolla-cup  
Of her little, wayward heart.

Dear little Delia !  
We never cared to win a peep  
Within the silence of your heart ;  
We thought it still was fast asleep  
To life's distress of grief and smart !  
How could we, could we doubt  
But that, because so fair without,  
The rose was also fair within ?

Yet all the while you learnt to bear,  
With child-like smiles, your woman's share  
    In mournful heritage of sin.  
And down, deep down, all night, all day,  
The slow tears fell, the heart was sore,  
The hidden dole of anguish wore  
    Your heart away.

    Dear little Delia!  
Who would have thought you could have died?  
    Or lived, except as young and gay,  
    Until the wide world passed away?  
Who would have thought you could have slept  
    A sleep so undisturbed as death,  
    Without those sweetest smiles to chase  
    Each other o'er your tender face,  
    And laughter bubbling in your breath;  
Without your mavis-mellow voice  
Persuading others to rejoice;  
Without your gay lips moved to chatter,  
    And your soft, bare, little feet,  
With a rhythmical, light patter  
    Stirring o'er your chamber floor?  
Oh! memory, too sad, too sweet,  
    Never, never more  
    In this long life to be  
    Aught but a memory;  
    Dear little Delia!

## LOVE'S PETITION.

I ASK no sound of thy remembered voice,  
    No last look at thy face,  
No knowledge of thy ways along the world,  
    No place against thy place ;  
I ask to do no service in thy cause ;  
    Though if, beside thy feet,  
I but might labour, toil, and strive for thee,  
    Oh ! God, how sweet, how sweet !

But this I ask not ; nor to ever take  
    The first, the foremost place  
In any secret sweetness of thy thought,  
    The tumult of thy heart ;  
Content were I, beloved, content indeed  
    To fill the lowest place,  
To know thou could'st divine a presence there  
    No changes might efface.

Forget me as thou wilt ; forget my all,  
    My love, my life, the while  
Some happy one, some best-beloved of thine  
    Receives thy look, thy smile ;  
But if through loss my love thou should'st recall  
    To comfort thee in pain,  
Than this no more I ask, except that thou  
    May'st soon forget again.

## LOVE'S SERVICE.

WOULD that I might have laid these hands in thine ;  
These hands, weak as a human hand may be,  
But strong with courage that were all divine  
    If taxed for thee !

Would that I might have laid these hands in thine,  
Faithfully warm through life's cold destiny,  
For ever o'er all shadow and all shine  
    To work with thee !

Would that I might have laid these hands in thine,  
Through the long, mournful days there have to be—  
When this and that of joy thou must resign—  
    To comfort thee !

But since this is not, and God knoweth best  
To whom our service in this world must be,  
These hands content themselves, together pressed  
    In prayer for thee !

## SPRING SONGS.

### I.

#### MARCH WINDS.

OH! for the March wind, and the March sun,  
                    And the March rain,  
That go wild together upon the hill!  
Oh! for the trees that never are still,  
And the mad, inconstant rains that fill  
Young flower-cups and honey-combed vein  
Of primrose leaves, till wild winds spill  
                    Them out once more!  
The glorious wild wind from the Western shore.

He comes from the Western shore,  
His wings are wet with the spray  
From the billows, crested white,  
                    And the hollows grey;  
His voice has brought the roar  
Of the ocean's tempestuous calling,  
And it sounds across the land  
Like the sweep of a wave upon the sand,  
                    Rising and falling.

Oh! for the March wind, and the mad wind,  
And the wild wind,  
That sweeps through the hanging wood;  
Oh! for the flush, and rapture, and rush,  
And stir in the blood,  
As the wind cometh over the moorland,  
And over the lowland,  
That lies like a misty, unbreaking billow  
Down in the hollow  
'Tween hill-side and hill-side!

Oh! for the feeling of wild exultation;  
Like a lark, winged wide,  
Mounting and singing, and singing and mounting,  
With the wind beating, pursuing, and meeting;  
Glorious, tumultuous.  
Oh! for the March wind, its rage and its roar!  
The fetterless wind from the wild Western shore!

## II.

## A LARK'S SONG IN MAY.

Oh! love, love, love,  
I must away, I must away!  
Nay, love, entreat me not to stay,  
Entreat, entreat me not.

Some passion of supreme delight  
Bears me from pastures, dew-bedight,  
O'er stream, o'er quiet mountain-height  
Half veiled in mists of morning light!

Entreat, entreat me not!  
'Tis thine to brood so low and still,  
I must against the sky fulfil  
The mission of my lot.

Fear not that any flight of cloud  
Thee from my furthest ken could shroud;  
Nay, at Heav'n's very gate,  
I look from countless heights of space  
Upon thy love-illumined place;  
The careless flowers' nodding grace  
About thy nest I seem to trace,  
And thee, and thee,  
Sweet love, I see,  
Sit patient, waiting for thy mate.

Oh! cloud on cloud, I mount me higher!  
Oh! flushed trees, trembling into leaf!  
Oh! youth of joy, oh! last of grief!  
Oh! tenderness of Spring's desire!  
Now every bird hath built his bower,  
Where April fringes with its shower  
The sweets of leaf and bud and flower!

Now every bird hath won his mate  
With wooing hot and passionate ;  
And high and low, and wide and far,  
'Neath flooded light and single star,  
From glade, and height, and woodland, starts  
The music of contented hearts !

Oh ! love, love, love,  
I come again, I come again,  
With wings that touched the cloudlet's rain !  
I come again, I come again,  
With rapture that is almost pain !

Oh ! love, love, love,  
I come to thee,  
I come to thee.

## III.

## IN MAY.

Now Spring toward the distance dim  
Steps soft and loth across the land ;  
She gathers up the flowers she sowed  
And bears them, drooping, in her hand ;  
The Proserpine-loved daffodil,  
The primrose scattered on the lea,  
The fragrant-hearted violet,  
And fragile-faced anenome.

The faded blooms from windy March,  
The tear-wet buds from April's rain,  
Each love-gift that earth loves no more,  
She takes unto herself again ;  
Then, lifting up her life-flushed arm,  
On which the timid birdlings rest,  
She wafts them back to Home once more,  
And fades adown the golden West.

A fairer one shall take her place,  
With butterflies, like prismèd loves,  
Courting the clustering May she brings,  
And roses, white as Venus' doves ;  
Touching with soft, caressing wings  
The odorous buds in sun-warmed spots,  
The delicate, uncurling fern,  
And tender-eyed forget-me-nots.

Ah ! gracious days, as bright and fair,  
And growing thick with vivid green,  
As when the Royal lover leant  
From out his open lattice-screen,  
And, unaware, looked down and saw  
One in the sweet May garden space,  
Unconscious, happy as a flower,  
With early summer on her face.

Ah ! gracious days, as lovely now  
As when those two thus learnt to love ;  
Ah ! happy hours, whose sunny lights  
Too quickly unto even move ;  
'Tis life to see a flower live,  
To feel the rapture of the lark,  
And list the mated thrushes drop  
Their vespers down the gentle dark !

## HUNTING SONG.

“HARK, for’ard, away!” Through the morn soft and grey  
The words come and go;  
And my good mare and I tremble through at the cry  
Of the bold Tally-ho!

Off, off with the first at the life-stirring “burst,”  
We followed away;  
Our breaths deep and steady, our hearts bold and ready,  
For a hot run that day.

For the scent was breast-high, and to do or to die  
The one thought of my soul;  
A red dog-fox led, the hounds streamed ahead,  
And we raced to the goal!

Half wild with delight at the pigeon-like flight,  
O’er the open we flew;  
And my gallant, tried mare, with the best of them there  
Galloped steady and true.

Full-cry, off around the steep hill-side they wound,  
Through the fence, o'er the ditch;  
"Who follows," men said, "in a trice will be dead,  
Or be devil or witch!"

I sat still and steady, my heart light and ready  
As a feather that's blown;  
She flew o'er like a bird, not a single twig stirred,  
And we went on alone!

Oh! maddest of rapture, for a creature to capture  
Scarce once in his day;  
And good-bye to dull care when I and my mare  
Hear "Hark, for'ard, away!"

## MNEMOSYNE.

SHE paused, compelled by memory to stay  
The feet too eager for the lagging heart,  
That, flooded o'er with thought,—like Fate apart,  
Sad-eyed, divining all,—took Life's survey.  
Round her enfolding dusk, and through the grey,  
Against the fragrant heart of roses leant,  
Sad Philomel across the silence sent  
Sweet melody, and sang eve's heart away.  
From out her hand, unconscious of its loss,  
Some fading flowers, softly, one by one,  
Fell at her feet upon the dewy moss.  
Too deep for tears, the grief of days far gone  
Gazed from her eyes, as, down Time's shadowed track,  
She, o'er her shoulder looking, yearned far back !

## A LEGEND OF FAITH.

SHE slept. And at night's midmost gloom  
An Angel lighted in the room ;  
" Come," low he breathed and tenderly,  
    " Some hearts ere nearing God o'er-brim  
With earthly suffering." And she,  
    In spirit, rose and followed him.

Along the quiet streets they went,  
O'er meads and pastures dew-besprent ;  
Through sleeping woods where larches hung  
    Their feathery tufts of tender green,  
And many a Spring wild flower flung  
    Sweet odours to the blue serene.

'Mid hill and dale they patient trod,  
O'er thorny path and daisied sod ;  
Past haunts where woodland songsters small  
    In sleep forgot their vespers sweet ;  
He led her tenderly through all,  
    Unto a far-off city street.

“Come,” still he breathed, “thyself prepare  
For this worst woe thou hast to bear ;  
Rememb’ring, whatsoe’er there be  
Of griefs thou canst not understand,  
This truth should all avail for thee,  
God’s deeds to noble ends are planned !”

A latch he touched, and from the gloom  
Led her within a shining room,  
Where whispered speech, and shout and song,  
And curses loud, and deep, and long,  
And clink of glass and laughter high,  
With careless words of mockery,  
And sounds of horrid revelry,  
Burst upward to the solemn sky.

There, many a one-time guileless face  
Had long abjured its maiden grace ;  
There, kiss and oath together ran  
As at a Devil’s feast of feasts ;  
And God’s divinest image, man,  
Was lower than the very beasts.

And lo ! upon her stricken glance,  
Flashed a belovèd countenance ;  
Unlovely with unlovely thought,  
With passion’s vilenesses distraught ;

And from his lips a murmur fell  
That would have raptured inmost Hell!

Then she, her tortured gaze turned low,  
With long, sick shudderings of woe,  
Unto the listening Angel spoke,  
    "Behold, I love him; love him much!"  
And into sudden sorrow broke,  
    'Neath the compassion of his touch.

"I asked no thing from God of love,  
No charm of deed, of look to move  
His alien heart unto my heart;  
    I only asked in ministry  
To him, to take my humble part;  
    Content, whate'er the toil might be!

"Oh! hours of tears; oh! days of prayer;  
Oh! months and years of aching care;  
Oh! anguish of requited hope,  
    Too bitter to be understood;  
Is all in vain with God to cope,  
    In pleading his eternal good?"

The Angel then, "Ask God still less,  
To satisfy thy happiness!"  
And she, "Nothing I ask! I trust, oh! God;  
    Some day, some way the battle won!

My fevered haste by faith o'er-trod;  
Thy will, Thy own best way be done!"

And with her eyes' sweet radiance  
Scanned the belovèd countenance;  
Nor shrank, nor paled with anguish fear,  
As once again upon her ear,  
From 'tween his lips, the murmur fell  
That would have raptured inmost Hell!

Then turned, but on her trembling hand  
The Angel laid his hand's command,  
"That thou should'st pass, it was not meant,  
Unto thy earthly tenement;  
Return, return again with me,  
And see the human left of thee!"

The latch he lifted, and once more  
Led her without the sinful door;  
O'er meads and pastures dew-besprent,  
O'er hill and dale they silent went,  
Until at morning's tender gloom,  
Lighted within her quiet room.

And lo! one lay, and on her face  
Tear after tear had left its trace;  
Tear after bitter tear, the while  
Her lips were parted with a smile.

The Angel then, "Read thou the token;  
At the first word by thy love spoken,  
Behold! thy human heart was broken!

    Come now with me, and learn aright,  
    Reward of Faith, how infinite!"

## BY THE SEA-HO !

THE stars are bright,  
The moon's alight,  
The fish-boats rock from left to right,  
For the eastern wind is high-ho ;  
It rushes o'er  
The ocean shore ;  
The billows rise with a crash and a roar,  
As though to touch the sky-ho !

On a narrow ledge  
Of the grey cliff edge,  
Where callow guillemots might fledge,  
A girl leans crouching down-ho ;  
She looks across  
The waves that toss,  
And thinks of the grief, and sorrow, and loss  
To fall that night on the town-ho !

Far out, away  
Beyond the bay,  
A fisher-boat rides wild and gay  
Upon the seething foam-ho ;  
Now low, now high,  
And the sea-gulls cry,  
And the girl looks out 'neath the shining sky  
To the boat that will ne'er come home-ho !

In the highest tree  
Beside the sea  
Three crows sit dark as dark can be,  
Staring across the waves-ho ;  
They sit and think,  
While their dull eyes blink,  
Of the billows that roar at the grey cliff brink,  
And the myriad ocean graves-ho !

The wild clouds ride,  
The cold stars hide,  
The night's wings stretch forth far and wide,  
And the crashing billows ebb-ho !  
Below the cliff,  
Like a sea-beat skiff,  
A fisher-lad lies cold and stiff,  
Wound in a sea-weed web-ho !

So still he lies  
At morning-rise,  
A girl leans smiling to his eyes,  
And treasures his death-cold hand-ho !  
While swinging by,  
With a mocking cry,  
Three crows across the sea-shore fly  
Heavily o'er the land-ho !

## A VISION.

AMID the purple heather of the moor—  
That rises, Titan-like, from out yon vale  
Threading the golden West—lying, through deeps  
And deeps of solitary thought I sank,  
When on my startled ear a sigh arose  
Beyond all earthly sounds of utmost woe,  
And far adown the shining slopes I saw  
A vision that can never pass from mind.  
Behold! around the mountain's shoulder came,  
In silent order, mournful forms of gloom,  
Dark-robed, dark-stol'd, with folded pinions,  
Blacker than nights forsaken by the stars;  
And still, with noiseless footsteps, still they came,  
And, passing, ever took their onward way  
Beside the windings of the moorland stream.  
And lo! to lead the path, an Angel went,  
Of dazzling loveliness that shamed the sun;

White-robed was he, and on his shining brow  
The perfect peace of knowledge that perceived  
Christ conquer o'er the furthest woe of Time!  
Yet, as they passed, once more arose that sigh,  
As from a world of breaking hearts that poured  
Their anguish in one voiceless breath to God!  
Some, through sad tears, gazed forth upon the fields,  
The piping birds of happy Summer-time;  
Some, with imploring eyes, looked unto Heav'n,  
Or earthward bent their faces' hopelessness;  
Whilst o'er the patient lips of happier ones  
The trembling promise of a coming smile  
Broke, beautiful with largest faith in Love!  
Then, at my side, a shining Presence spake—  
“Lo! these are they who died far fallen short  
Of Death's immediate fulnesses of joy;  
Who through the cycles of God's punishment  
Strive for the sinless Courts of Paradise!  
These suffer still! Remembrance and Remorse,  
The Fire, the Worm of Hell, torture each heart!  
No sound, no sight, but doth again recall  
A very anguish of sad memory;  
No memory but acheth o'er the woe  
Of good that was not, but which might have been!  
And unto them the Angels minister;  
With influence of word, of deed, of love,  
Assisting the endeavour of each thought  
Toward the rising of the perfect day

When on the low-bent brow of Penitence  
Forgiveness lays the healing of its hand!"  
Then silence fell, and round the mournful crowd  
Innumerable Angels hov'ring sang,  
Until across the suffering eyes of grief  
There flashed a glory of supremest Faith!

## LOVE'S AFTERMATH.

ONE time, my heart, rose-like amid its leaves,  
Contented dwelt, nor dreamt of larger things,  
Till Love, the sun,—with warm and od'rous wings,  
And eyes, clear as the harvest-moon that weaves  
Her tender light 'mongst early russet sheaves,—  
From o'er it charmed, delicate fold by fold,  
Soft petallings, and to the dewy cold,  
And farewell swallow-songs from rain-fringed eaves  
It op'ning, looked upon the face of Love!  
And lo! night came! and, roaring far above  
The flaming woodlands, hollow winds went by,  
With scudding sounds of dreadful mockery,  
And slow storm-drops, whose scorching lightnings fell  
Like happy memories on those in Hell!

## A WOMAN'S WISH.

IF thou would'st draw me to that heart of thine,  
Make me companion of thy truest self.

Bring forth no gold, none other than the delf  
Of daily life, to serve the food, the wine  
Of thy thoughts' present minist'ring to mine ;

Scatter no needless flowers o'er the path

Lest we should reap their scentless aftermath  
'Mid days despoiled of our faith's summer-shine.

Let me stand equal in thy joy and grief,

With smiles requiting that, with comfort this,

Howso it be but some low word of bliss  
Divinely taught to me for thy relief ;

Yea, let me feel, whate'er of fortune comes,

My heart for evermore thy Home of Homes.

## LOVE'S REMEMBRANCES.

I do not ask God that I may forget  
The very least of thy remembered ways,  
The far-off shining of those golden days  
When it was granted that we sometimes met :  
Thy looks, thy smiles I sit and think of yet ;  
The thoughtless tricks of gesture and of speech,  
It doth content me to remember each,  
Howso with anguish of heart-sick regret :  
And still,—although so oft within my heart  
I feel the tears of keenest sorrow start,—  
I could not, best-beloved one, ever pray  
A single sweet of memory away ;  
I only ask, when I such joys recall,  
With resignation to remember all.

## INFLUENCE.

AH! strange! year after year slips by—  
As gently as adown eve's tender hush  
The tender vespers of some happy thrush  
Wakeful for love's sake 'neath the star-lit sky—

Short years of striving to the goal,  
Of labour equalised by labour's love:  
Long years of loss, of alien thoughts that prove  
Unchanging severance 'tween soul and soul.

Thy name, these days, I scarcely hear,  
I can keep count of glances at thy face;  
While unto thee unknown my voice, my place,  
Far-off these footsteps that were once so near.

Passed from each life! Still this not all!  
Some other hand may comfort thy dear hand,  
Some stronger soul in thy heart's vision stand  
To walk with thee where once my way might fall.

Ah! strange! yet love some other one,  
So that it be for thy best happiness;  
O'er all, through all, thou art to me no less  
Than in the days of our communion!

As then, so now, and to the end;  
Remembrances of thee evangels are,  
Thy past approval still the guiding star  
To deeds that thou might'st even more commend.

Whate'er I win, take thou some praise!  
The influence of that far-off joy of ours—  
Like treasured gifts of scented woodland flow'rs—  
Shall shed sweet fragrance to the last of days!

## YESTERDAY.

'Twas yesterday the world was young,  
Birds' voices filled the sunny noon,  
And flowers their faint perfumes flung  
Along the pathways of the moon.  
But yesterday hath no returning,  
O vain regret, O fruitless yearning!

'Twas yesterday our loved ones lived,  
And walked by us amid the flow'rs,  
With gentle deeds, communing words,  
And looks that answered love to ours.  
But yesterday hath no returning,  
O vain regret, O fruitless yearning!

'Twas yesterday the heart felt glad,  
A smile, a word could give delight,  
And every thought its radiance had,  
Like stars that glorify the night.  
But yesterday hath no returning,  
O vain regret, O fruitless yearning!

'Twas yesterday! Oh! foolish plaint,  
    Could hearts endure a twice-told way,  
Already they beat low and faint  
    With struggling once through day by day.  
But yesterday hath no returning,  
O blessedness of fruitless yearning!

## AN EVENING SONG.

IN thicket and dell sang the nightingales,  
So low and long, so soft and sweet ;  
And the delicate coolness of grass to our feet  
Felt fresh as the meads of Thessalian vales,  
Where, touching his lyre by sheepfold and pen,  
Apollo made happy the children of men ;  
And oh ! in a passion of tenderest pain  
The Summer night wept and was quiet again.

Light shook the leaves 'neath the soft, southern wind,  
And the stars were out and the moon was high,  
And the phantom cloud-ships sailed through the sky,  
And left the beautiful world behind,  
As white, and as wan, and as tender as she  
Who was spared of the children of Niobe ;  
And oh ! in a passion of tenderest pain  
The Summer night wept and was quiet again.

Oh ! beauty of Heav'n, of woodland and lea,  
Oh ! time of contentment too peaceful, too pure,  
Behold ! in contentment I could not endure,  
And thought, inarticulate, rushed over me,  
Till my heart, in a passion of tenderest pain,  
Like the Summer night, wept, and was quiet again.

## LOVE'S MELODIES.

OH ! tuneful hands of Love, I pray thee play  
Thy truant melodies on my heart's strings ;  
No matter of what changeful fashionings,  
If now a Psalm, and now a roundelay,  
A sobbing grief, a thought part sad, part gay,  
That, lark-like through the morning's glory, springs  
With ever climbing and impatient wings ;  
No matter how thou playest if I may  
But feel thy delicate, slight fingers thrill  
The memories long grown so mute, so still,  
And hear across the land the Summer leaves  
Whisper soft orisons 'neath starry eaves,  
Till Happiness smiles upward to the sky,  
And Sorrow, hearkening, goes downcast by.

## SUFFICIENCIES.

If I had known it were so deep a pain  
To fill life's sweetest intervals with song ;  
To pass, companionless, the busy throng  
Where careless lives go smiling, twain and twain ;  
For ever, far beyond all loss, to gain,  
And ever, far beyond all gain, to long  
Toward possession still more full, more strong?  
If I had known how little and how vain  
The deepest anguish of dumb thought to reach  
The consolation of a perfect speech?  
If I had known? Oh ! God, I question not  
The wide beneficences of my lot,  
Than this indeed I ask no higher thing,  
Still let me suffer, and still let me sing.





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